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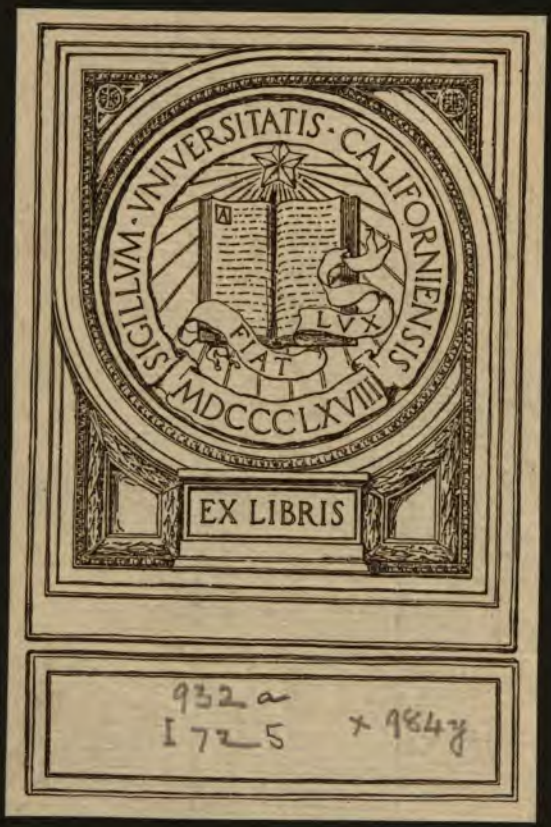

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A Guide

to the

Operas; Symphonic Poems; Overtures Incidental Music *and* Songs

Based on

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

by

THEODORE J. IRWIN

Price 30 Cents Post Paid

Theodore J. Irwin
1548 N St.
Fresno
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HERALD FRESNO

INDEX

TRAGEDIES

	Page
Antony and Cleopatra	3
Coriolanus	3
Hamlet	1
Henry VIII	6
Julius Caesar	3
King Lear	2
Macbeth	4
Merchant of Venice	3
Othello	2
Richard the Third	3
Romeo and Juliet	4
Romeo and Juliet	5

COMEDIES

As You Like It	9
Measure for Measure	10
Merry Wives of Windsor	10
Midsummer Night's Dream	9
Much Ado About Nothing	10
Taming the Shrew	10
The Tempest	7
Twelfth Night	8
Winter's Tale	11

SONGS

Cymbeline	12
Love's Labor Lost	12
Venus and Adonis	12
The Passionate Pilgrim	12
The Merchant of Venice	12
Two Gentlemen of Verona	12

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Introduction

The aim of this book is to give a complete list of the musical compositions, operatic and orchestral, that are based upon the different plays of Shakespeare. To some of these works short notes are appended. I hope the book will be of especial value to librarians, music clubs and teachers.

That the book may be of the most practical use, I have adopted the following plan:

Works of prime importance are marked thus**.

Works of secondary importance are marked thus*.

If there are several compositions based on one play, I place them in the order in which they should be acquired.

A certain proportion of compositions named have no sign attached. These are the works which have not stood the test of time. I should also state that a number of Shakespeare's plays have never been set to music, speaking in an orchestral and operatic sense.

Many people have doubtless wondered that the great composers have not written more music based on Shakespeare's plays. This may be attributed to two causes: In the first place, the attempt to heighten the effect of Shakespeare's plays by presenting them in an operatic or orchestral form is a task that would daunt any man not profoundly conscious of his ability, or possessed of a highly favorable opinion of his own talents. Secondly, some of the great classic composers left the operatic field untouched; others selected their subjects from such sources as the Greek tragedies (Gluck), Legends (Mozart), Folk Lore (Weber), Mythology (Wagner); and in fact, with the exception of Mendelssohn and Berlioz, we must look for the musicians who were at their prime during the last half century to find our musical settings of Shakespeare.

Regarding the purchasing of these compositions, I would say that two-, and sometimes four-hand pianoforte arrangements of most of the leading orchestral works can be had, while the leading operatic works will be found in vocal score with frequently an English version under the original text of the opera.

There are several books published giving the traditional airs to Shakespeare's songs. I omit mention of those airs, but after each play will be found a list of mostly modern settings of the Bard's lyrics.

TRAGEDIES

HAMLET

****Overture Fantasia, Op. 67A. Composed 1885, Tschaikowsky**

This work does not offer the clear cut outline of the play which we find in the same composer's setting of "Romeo and Juliet" or "The Tempest." Neither is it as effective pianistically as the others. In its orchestral form, with all the rich tints of the orchestral combinations, one would have a much clearer conception of the work. Of course, this statement applies to all pianoforte arrangements; but some works, as the two mentioned above, are more effective on the piano than others. The best one can do is to state the movements.

Opening with a Lento Lugubre, the music works up into a Poco Animato. Then the tempo goes back to Andante, quickly followed by an Allegro Vivace movement. This movement is quite long, relatively speaking, and is followed by an Andante of eighteen measures. This passage has the Russian mould, and later on is treated more fully. A mournful melody, which is undoubtedly the "Ophelia" motif, is next heard. This is given out once and followed by a passage Animato. The theme preceding the "Ophelia" motif then appears again for extended treatment, then the "Ophelia" motif again. A passage of stormy music folows leading into an Allegro, Alla Marcia, and the work end with a short Grave movement.

***"Melodram, Maersche and Entractes" to Hamlet, Tschaikowsky**

****Symphonic Poem, No. 10 - - - - - - - Liszt**

This work has neither program nor any kind of preface, and is described in the original manuscript as a "Prelude to the Drama." It brings before the hearers the brooding prince —not the story of his life, not even his whole career, only a dominating feature. The indications, "very slow and sombre," "Appassionata ed agitato assai," "this episode in three-two time should be played extremely quietly and should sound like a shadow picture." Pointing to Ophelia—"ironica lugubre," shows that allusions to persons and circumstances affecting his mood were not wanting.

****Hamlet, Orchestral Poem - - - - - - Macdowell**
***Ophelia, Orchestral Poem - - - - - - Macdowell**
Overture, Op. 37 - - - - - - - - - Gade
Overture - - - - - - - - - - G. A. MacFarren
Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Joachim
Opera, Hamlet, Comp. 1868 - - - - Ambroise Thomas

This French work is the only attempt to write an operatic version of "Hamlet," and as the music is more tuneful than dramatic, and the librettists butchered the play, it can hardly be considered as a serious attempt to present Hamlet in operatic form.

KING LEAR

***Overture**
***Entractes** - - - - - - - **Balakireff (1837-)**

****Overture, "Le Roi Lear," - - - - - Hector Berlioz**

Composed about 1825.

This overture ranks high among dramatic overtures.

Overture - - - - - - - - - Bazzini (1818-1897)

OTHELLO

****Opera (composed 1887) - - - - - - - Verdi**

Notable passages and scenes in the play:

End of first act, duet, Othello-Desdemona.

Second Act, Iago, Scene "Credo."

Finale, Othello appealing to Heaven to punish the wife he believes untrue.

Third Act, Othello accusing Desdemona of unchastity.

Fourth Act, "Willow Song."

"His (Verdi's) inexhaustible stream of melody remained as pure and full as ever, while the more declamatory parts of the opera, down to the slightest piece of recitative, are informed by a richness of suggestion, and an unerring instinct for truth, such as it would be vain to seek in his earlier work. In 'Othello' the action is rapid for the most part, and in many scenes the music only aims at furnishing a suitable accompaniment to the dialogue." (Streatfield—The Opera.)

"From the opening scene to the strangling scene, the music flows swiftly, as swiftly as the drama. Rich, varied and eloquent, the orchestra seldom tarries in its vivid and acute commentary. (Huneker.)

****Overture, "Othello," Op. 93 - - - - - - Dvorak**

First performed in America, 1893.

"It is a graphic picture of the last scenes of the tragedy—the prayer of Desdemona, her sleep and terrible awakening, the jealousy and revenge of the Moor." (Upton—Standard Concert Repertory.)

Opera - - - - - - - - - - - - - Rossini

Long since vanished from the boards.

Symphonic Poem - - - - Zdenko Fibisch (1850-1900)

Songs:

Ave Maria - - - - - - - - - - - Verdi
And let me the canakin clink - Harvey Worthington Loomis
The Willow Song - - - - - - - - Rossini
The Willow Song - - - - - - - - Humfrey

JULIUS CAESAR

Overture, Op. 128 - - - - - - - - Schumann

Outside of this overture, which is one of Schumann's inferior works, I can find no mention of any other compositions.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

***Overture - - - - - - - - - Vincent D'Indy**

D'Indy is one of the leading French composers, and such a subject should be peculiarly well fitted to D'Indy's orchestral coloring and melodic outline.

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Rubinstein
Overture, title of "Cleopatre" - - - - - August Enna

CORIOLANUS

There is no music written to Shakespeare's play, but Beethoven wrote one of his noblest overtures to a play based on the same subject, and written, I believe, by an Austrian dramatist.

RICHARD THE THIRD

***Symphonic Poem - - - - - - - - - Smetana**

The composer speaks of this work in a letter to Liszt saying: "It consists of one piece (Satz) and the tonal vesture (Betonung) clings pretty closely to the action of the tragedy—the attainment of the proposed aim after the overcoming of all obstacles, triumph and fall of the hero. Two short motives are quoted as representative of the hero (who acts throughout the whole movement), and of the opposing party.

Volkman also wrote an overture.

MERCHANT OF VENICE

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Macfarren
Incidental Music - - - - - - - - - - Sullivan

Songs:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps - - - - - - Calcott
Quartette, mixed voices.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps - - - - Henry Leslie
Quartette, mixed voices.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps - - - - William Reed
Quartette, mixed voices.

MACBETH

Symphonic Poem, Op. 23 (composed 1887) - Richard Strauss

This is the first of Strauss's symphonic poems. Beyond the title—that is, beyond the wider reference to the drama—there is little to indicate the details. This "little" consists of the word "Macbeth" above the sixth bar, and further on these words of Lady Macbeth, "Hie thee hither, that I may pour my spirits in thy ear, and chastise with the valour of my tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem to have crowned thee withal." If a brief account of the work as a whole is wanted, we may call it an illustration of Macbeth's character and soul-struggles.

Cantata, Lady Macbeth - - - - - - - Wambach

Overture and incidental music - - - - - - Spohr

This has passed into oblivion.

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Bruell

Overture, Op. 30 - - - - - - - - - Lucas

Incidental music - - - - - - - - - Sullivan

Opera - - - - - - - - - - - Verdi

This opera was killed by the libretto. The music shows Verdi striving for a higher plane of musical expression than he attained in his earliest operas; but nevertheless it is one of Verdi's poorest operas.

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Raff

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Lucas

ROMEO AND JULIET

***Opera, "Romeo et Juliette" - - - - - Ch. Gounod**

Produced in 1869.

The libretto is in five acts.

First act: Ball at Capulet's house, and first meeting of lovers.

Second act: Balcony scene.

Third act: Marriage of Romeo and Juliet, Friar Laurence's cell; duels in streets of Venice.

Fourth act: Parting of lovers in Juliet's chamber.

Fifth act: Tomb of the Capulets.

Gounod's music is considered by critics to be but a faint reflection of the enchanting strains found in "Faust." Occasionally his music is very fine, but the general dramatic worth can be estimated by Gounod's own action in closing the Fourth Act with Friar Laurence giving the potion, making no attempt to set the potion scene to music.

Seventeen operas have been written on this play, but Gounod's opera is the only one that has survived.

****Overture Fantasia - - - - - - - Tschaikowsky**

Here we have an orchestral work by the great Russian composer that stands in the first rank of works of its kind.

Tschaikowsky at one time had serious thoughts of writing an opera on the play, and it is to be regretted that he did not carry out his intention. In this overture-fantasia no descriptive notes of any kind are attached to the score, yet we can trace the action of the play from beginning to end in the music.

The composition opens with religious harmonies suggesting Friar Laurence, or symbolical of the serious action of the play. The music gradually works into an Allegro descriptive of the hatreds of the rival houses. Measure after measure of syncopated, crashing chords, rushing passages for violins, underneath, the basses in deadly earnestness. Studied out, this impresses the student as thoroughly descriptive of the raging passions of the opposing families. The tumult dies down and the Love Theme enters. It is very short—only eight measures—but it comes again worked out to a magnificent climax. After the Love Theme comes a passage of lamenting chords that seem to say, "Thy joy is brief; canst thou not feel the chill wind that ere long will quench the rapture of these embraces; the icy hand that will lead thee unresisting to take thy place with thy forbears who also loved and died."

The strain is brief; the Love Theme enters again, soars aloft, then dies down. The stormy movement begins again, and we read in the music the many episodes which mark the tumultuous passage of the drama. Again the weird chords enter with a throbbing undercurrent. Again the Love Theme enters; this time it is worked out Apassionata. The ominous strains of the feud are heard again, but they quickly die down and sombre chords follow. Then comes a melodic arpeggio passage. Could we call it the soft lament of gentle, high-born maidens on the passing of the loveliest soul of all?—and the composition ends with dirge-like chords.

****Romeo and Juliette," Op. 39 - - - - - Berlioz**

Dramatic symphony with choruses, vocal solos, and a prologue in choral recitative.

A distinguished critic, speaking of this work, says:

"In 'Romeo and Juliette,' Berlioz produced a work which shows his genius and craftsmanship at their highest pitch; but which as a whole is a monstrous jumble of incongruities—a compound of all styles and genres, where symphony and cantata, the narrative, the lyrical, the dramatic and the programmatic are intermixed in defiance of taste and reason. The five pieces that form the predominating symphonic portion are of unequal value—three of them belong to the composer's very best achievements and most commendable specimens of programme music; and two to his least happy achievements and most doubtful specimens of programme music."

The three notable orchestral pieces are: The first and

then exceedingly brilliant "Romeo alone"; Sadness and Concert and Ball (Grand Festival at the house of Capulet); the enchanting "Love Scene—a serene night, the silent and deserted garden of Capulet"; and the indescribable Scherzo, "Queen Mab, or the Dream Fairy."

HENRY VIII

Opera - - - - - - - - - - - Saint Saens

Produced in 1883. This opera is still popular in Paris.

This opera, like all of the distinguished French composer's, is a masterly piece of writing.

Orpheus with his lute - - - - - Sir Arthur Sullivan

Orpheus with his lute - - - - - - Carl Busch

Orpheus with his lute - - - - - - C. F. Manney

Orpheus with his lute - - - - - Clara Ross Ricci

Trio, female voices.

COMEDIES

THE TEMPEST

"The Tempest" has had at least fourteen operatic settings by French, Russian, Italian and German composers, one of the most recent works being—

Der Sturm - - - - - - Zdenko Fibisch (1850-1900)

Also—

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Vierling
Overture - - - - - - - - - - - - Raff
Incidental music - - - - - - - - - - Sullivan
Ballet Music - - - - - - - - Ambroise Thomas
***Fantasy, "The Tempest" - - - - - John K. Paine**
***Music to "The Tempest" - - - - - Van Der Stucken**
****Fantasia, Op. 18 (composed 1873) - - - Tschaikowsky**

During the winter of 1872 Tschaikowsky asked his friend Vladimer Stassov to suggest a subject for a symphonic fantasia, a Shakespearian subject preferably. Stassov shortly wrote to Tschaikowsky, proposing "The Tempest," and outlining in elaborate and enthusiastic detail the poetic and dramatic plan which he conceived should underlie the music, as follows:

"I have in my mind that the sea should appear twice—at the beginning and at the end. At the beginning, in the introduction, I think of it as calm, until Prospero speaks the magic words and conjures up the storm. But this storm must break out instantaneously in all its violence, and not, as usually, becoming gradually wider and louder. I propose so peculiar a form for the storm, because in this case it is raised by magic words, whereas in all operas, symphonies and oratorios hitherto written it arises from natural causes. After the storm has abated the magic island appears in all its wonderful beauty, and the still more beautiful, still more glorious maid, Miranda, who, like a sunbeam, walks with light step on the island. Her conversation with Prospero, and immediately afterwards with the youth Ferdinand, who surprises and enraptures her, and with whom she at once falls in love. The motive of the falling in love should be like an unfolding, like a growing; in Shakespeare it is so described at the end of the first act; and I believe that would be the very thing for your talent. After this I would propose the appearance of Caliban, the animal-like, low slave; then further, Ariel, whose pro-

gramme is to be found in Shakespeare's song, "Come unto these yellow sands." After Ariel, Miranda and Ferdinand must again come upon the scene, but this time full of impetuous passion. Then the imposing figure of Prospero, who resigns his magic power, and takes leave of his past. At last, at the end, again the sea, the calm, still sea, which bathes the lonely island, now abandoned, whilst its hapy inhabitants are carried in a ship to distant Italy."

It will be noticed in going through the list of musical settings, that Tschaikowsky composed music to several of Shakespeare's plays. I recommend the "Life and Letters of Tschaikowsky," edited by Rose Newmarch, for those who wish to get a fuller insight into the personality of this man who devoted so much of his talent to musical expositions of Shakespeare's plays.

Songs:

No more dams I'll make for fish - - John Christopher Smith
Where the bee sucks - - - - - Dr. Thomas A. Arne
Where the bee sucks - - - - - Sir Arthur Sullivan
Where the bee sucks - - - - - Pelham Humfrey
Come unto these yellow sands - - - - Henry Purcell
Full fathom five thy father lies - - - - Henry Purcell
Full fathom five thy father lies - - - - Robert Johnson

TWELFTH NIGHT

Overture - - - - - - - - - - Mackenzie

Songs:

O mistress mine - - - - - - S. Coleridge Taylor
She never told her love - - - - Franz Joseph Haydn
When that I was a little tiny boy - - - Gerard Barton
When that I was a little tiny boy - - C. Villiers Stanford
When that I was a little tiny boy - - - Joseph Vernon
When that I was a little tiny boy - - - Robert Schumann
O mistress mine - - - - - - Villiers Stanford
Come away Death - - - - - - Villiers Stanford
O mistress mine - - - - - - - H. W. Cardew
O mistress mine - - - - - - H. Walford Davies
Come away, come away, death - - - H. Walford Davies
Come away, come away, death - - - H. Walford Davies
When that I was a little tiny boy - - - H. Walford Davies
O mistress mine - - - - - - - H. U. Drayton
Come away, Death - - - - - - H. U. Drayton
Which is the proper way to drink? - - - Dr. T. A. Arne
Comic glee, mixed voices.
If music be the food of love - - - - J. Charles Clifton

**Overture (
**Incidental
Scherzo;
drama; Interı
March; Allegı

I know a bank -
Duet for twı
Titania's cradle
You spotted snakı
Quartette, womı
Over hill, over dale -
Now the hungry lion rı
Much ado about nothing
Sigh no more, ladies - ıl
Sigh no more, ladies - - ..vens
Sigh no more, ladies - - Fisher
Take, oh take those lips away - John Wilson

AS YOU LIKE IT

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Lucas

Songs:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - - - J. Sargeant
Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - William Arms Fisher
The maid's garland - - - - - - - Dora Bright
Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - - Charles Hotham
Under the greenwood tree - - - - Charles Hotham
Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - Agnes Zimmerman
It was a lover and his lass - - - - - Thomas Morley
Under the greenwood tree - - - - - Carl Busch
Under the greenwood tree - - - - C. Hubert Parry
It was a lover and his lass - - - - Clough Leighter
Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - - Gerard Barton
Blow, blow, thou winter wind - - - - B. Luard Selby
Part song, mixed chorus.
What shall he have who killed the deer? - - H. R. Bishop
Male quartette.
It was a lover and his lass - - - - - Paul Ambrose
Quartette, mixed voices.
It was a lover and his lass - - - - - Gerard Barton
It was a lover and his lass - - - - - H. W. Cardew
Retraite (le chant D'amiens) - - - - - Paul Vidal
Sous bois (2d chant d'Amiens) - - - - Paul Vidal
Ecossaise, due des pages - - - - - - Paul Vidal
Choeur des chasseurs - - - - - - - Paul Vidal
Soli et choeur a 4 voix mixtes.

Wagner

ımitation
:cided its

rs Stanford
ector Berlioz
Nothing." It
ıt. Though hu-
ıng impression is
ıelancholy."—The

EW
ıng" - - - Goetz
- - - Rheinberger

Song:

Should he upbraid - - - - - - Sir Henry Bishop

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Falstaff, Opera (produced 1894) - - - - - Verdi

This opera is notable, outside of the intrinsic merit of the music, for two things: First, that Verdi was eighty years of age when he wrote it; and, secondly, the masterly libretto of Boito, the Italian poet and musician. The only liberty the librettist took was that of including a passage or two from Henry IV.

"It is the very incarnation of youth and high spirits. Verdi told an interviewer that he thoroughly enjoyed writing it. He has combined a schoolboy's sense of fun wtih the grace and science of Mozart. The part writing is often exceedingly elaborate, but the most complicated concerted pieces flow on as naturally as a ballad. The glorious finale fugue is an epitome of the work. It is really a marvel of contrapuntal ingenuity, yet it is so full of bewitching melody and healthy animal spirits that an uncultivated hearer would probably think it nothing but an ordinary jovial finale. In the last act Verdi has caught the charm and mystery of the sleeping forest with exquisite art. In the fairy music, too, he also reveals another side of his genius."

"The action in Falstaff is almost as rapid as if the text were spoken; and the orchestra, the wittiest and most sparkling

riant orchestra I ever heard,—comments upon the monologue and dialogue of the book. When the speech becomes rhetorical so does the orchestra. It is heightened speech, and instead of melody of the antique formal pattern, we hear the endless melody which Wagner employs. But Verdi's speech is his own, and does not savour of Wagner. If the ideas are not developed or do not assume vaster proportions, it is because of their character. They could not be so treated without doing violence tothe sense of proportion. Classic purity in expression, Latin exuberance, joyfulness, and an inexpressionably delightful atmosphere of irresponsible youthfulness and gaiety are all in this charming score. No one can ever reproach Verdi with lack of ideas in FALSTAFF. They are never ending. The orchestra flows furiously, like a stream of quicksilver, tossing up repartee, argument, facts, amplifying, developing and strengthening the text. No melody? Why, the opera is one, long, merry tune—jocund, blithe, sweet, dulcet and sunny. Few moods of melancholy, no moods of madness, but all gracious folly and fantasy. . . . . Verdi's musical scholarship is enormous. He paints delicate fairy-like pictures, using the most delicate pigments and with the daintiest touch imaginable; and then he pens a severe and truthful canon in the second act, which excites the admiration of the scholar." — James Huneker.

Richard Strauss says: "Falstaff is the greatest masterpiece of modern Italian music.

Merry Wives of Windsor, Opera - - - - - - Nicolai

The overture is familiar to everyone; but the opera as a whole is far below the plane of Verdi's.

Incidental Music - - - - - - - - - - Sullivan

TWELFTH NIGHT

Overture - - - - - - - - - - - Mackenzie

WINTER'S TALE

Overture - - - - - - - - - - Joseph Suk
Opera, "Hermione" - - - - - - - Max Bruch
Opera (produced in 1908) - - - - - - - Goldmark

Songs:

Autolycus' Song - - - - - - - - J. Greenhill
Lawn as white as driven snow - John Wilson or R. Johnson (?)
Six Songs (First Set) - - - - - - - - H. Baines

O mistress mine; When icicles hang by the wall; Orpheus with his lute; Sigh no more, ladies; Love's renewal; Shall I come, sweet love, to thee?

English Lyrics (Second Set) - - - C. Hubert H. Parry

O mistress mine; Take, oh take those lips away; No longer mourn for me; Blow, blow, thou winter wind; When icicles hang by the wall.

CYMBELINE

Songs:

Hark, Hark the Lark - - - - - - Franz Schubert
Hark, Hark the Lark (3-part, women's voices) - Fr. Schubert
Arranged by N. Clifford Page.
Hark, Hark the Lark - - - - - - G. A. McFarren
Quartette, mixed voices.
Hark Hark the Lark - - - Karl Friedrich Curschmann
Hark, Hark the Lark - - - - - - - Dora Bright
Fear no more the heat of the sun - - - C. Hubert H. Parry
Fear no more the heat of the sun - - - - - Howenstein
Mixed or men's voices.
Fear no more the heat of the sun - - - H. W. Cardew
Aubade - - - - - - - - - - - Paul Vidal

LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST

Songs:

When daisies pied and violets blue - - - - - - Arne
When icicles hang on the wall - - - - - - - Arne
Measure for Measure - - - - - - - - - Song
Take, oh take those lips away - - - - - - - Wilson
Take, oh take those lips away - - - - - J. A. Taylor
Take, oh take those lips away - - - - B. Luard-Selby
Chanson d'Hiver - - - - - - - - Paul Vidal
Chanson de Printemps - - - - - - - Paul Vidal

VENUS AND ADONIS

Bid me discourse - - - - - - - Sir Henry Bishop
Lo, here the gentle lark - - - - Sir Henry R. Bishop

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

Crabbed age and youth - - - - - - Hubert C. Parry
Crabbed age and youth - - Harvey Worthington Loomis

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Le carillon d'Amour (chanson de Porta) - - - Paul Vidal
Duo pour soprano et contralto.
Les coeurs fermes - - - - - - - - Paul Vidal
Duo pour soprano et alto.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Who is Sylvia? - - - - - - - Franz Schubert
Who is Sylvia? - - - - - - - - Gould, Monk
Who is Sylvia? - - - - - - - - Dora Bright

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